"Woman" Holds a Mirror Up to the Soul of Modern Women

The Sphinx Speaks

Madeleine Marx's Novel Tells How the Sex May Be Interpreted

THROUGH all the ages in which men have argued endlessly over the mystery, Woman, it seems never to have occurred to them that the simplest way to discover the devious courses of her mind would be to ask her what she thinks.

It is likely indeed that if she had been asked to speak and explicate herself in times past she would have found herself dumb. Expression in speech is the culmination of a long series of more elementary articulations. Without the primary self-assertions she could not master the language of the world. This new found power to express in words her reactions to life comes as the crescendo of her half century of social self-assertions.

"Woman," by Magdeleine Marx, translated from the French by Szold Seltzer (Thomas Seltzer, publisher), comes heralded from abroad by Romain Rolland, Georg Brandes, Bertrand Russell and others who have watched sympathetically women emerging into self-expression. It is an expression of the modern feminine consciousness, which, having found itself in new attitudes toward work and marriage and life, is now seeking its own intellectual idiom. The febrile feministic literature of which this is a part is not so much a disclosure as a self-searching. More intensely conscious than the orthodox woman of her essential quality, more fastidious than she in keeping faith with it, the new woman has need for a more exact self-explication.

In "Woman" she is objectivized to the eyes of the world. The particular woman of the story, which is in the impressionistic form of the modern novel, is a sort of mirror for the soul of the modern woman and there passes before it her image in familiar aspects. She is the girl coming to a new frank awareness through the confusion of adolescence; she is the daughter revolting from to middle class parental yoke and finding in economic independence the new key to living; she is the woman exploring human relationships, eager to clear for herself a new channel of living, impatient of the silt of convention through which she must dredge.

Out of these sharp pictures of her love and marriage, the birth of her child, motherhood, her love outside marriage, grows a fairly complete picture of the view of life of the advanced woman, her attitude toward all the decreed ideals. She is endlessly questioning of the easy illusions of the salvation inherent in love and marriage, of the beauty of birth, of the inspired way of motherhood. Love she knows to be an incompletely fulfilled promise which only in rare moments brings release from the incurable loneliness which is each human being's portion. Birth is a brutal primal struggle. And in this scene at a baby dispensary there is a bitter comment on the reality of instinctive motherhood. "A huge creature with a gray ogress head, high cheekbones and skin streaked with fine veins . . . dropped into an empty place and paraded her darling on her knees. 'My daughter's,' she explained to the circle around her. . . . 'Babies—I know a thing or two about babies. I've had eleven.' There was a general stir of compassion, followed by protests. 'I have two left.' She danced the mite on her knee. Her tower of a body swayed back and forth. Through her half-open jacket you could divine her dead breasts. There was something wierd and horrible in the dismal accustomedness of her knees."

Anglo-Saxon feminism has perhaps an accent of greater reserve than this Continental feminism of "Woman." The woman of this book is often mannered and excessive, smug and irritating as she is in real life. But there are flashes of universal experience, of wisdom and poetic understanding in this story. There is a crystallization of bourgeois home life everywhere in the girl's homecoming. "My family was exultant. Behold me returned to 'proper' life, from which I had been so long absent, by the massive trapdoor of marriage. . . . I took on a value in their reassured eyes, I became a somebody, and in the ardor of the first moment they had the impression that they completely forgave me."

And, after all, there is no explication in all the introspectiveness of "Woman." Perhaps it is that woman is as great a mystery to herself as she has ever been to the most romantic poet. Certainly this book does not tear the veil from the mystery, any more than have all the books men have written about themselves revealed the mystery of man.

MAGDELEINE MARX, author of "Woman," which is a French expression of the new feminism

Book Gossip

William McFee to Wed

WILLIAM M'FEE, author, seaman and chief engineer of the United Fruit steamer Turrialba, now plowing southward somewhere in tropical waters, will, upon his return, consummate a romance as colorful in its international character as full of the flavor of the high seas as any of his own stories. Last week Mr. McFee's fiancée, Mlle. Pauline Kondoff, arrived in New York City, after a journey half across the world, and is awaiting the author's return at the New Jersey home of his friend the artist, Arthur Elder.

Mlle. Kondoff is a Bulgarian, but looks very much like a Parisian, for she is small and slight, with red gold hair, olive skin and deep brown eyes that show every nuance of thought. She was born in Salonica twenty-six years ago. Because of an Italian grandmother she has always had a fondness for the Italian language, and part of her education was received in Italy. She speaks seven languages—English is not one of them. But as Mr. McFee speaks French fluently this language has always been her medium of conversation with her fiancé.

During the World War Mlle. Kondoff was in Smyrna with her sister, and it was there that she met William McFee. The course of true love in their case seems to have been a rapid current, for on the first day of their meeting Mlle. Kondoff promised to marry him and go to America. But this arrangement was not easily carried out during war time, for Bulgaria and England were enemy countries and Mr. McFee was engaged in transport service under the flag of Great Britain. So there had to be an enforced waiting.

The obstacles were not all overcome, however, with the close of the war, for Bulgaria is still carrying on hostilities with Turkey, and it is almost impossible for a Bulgarian to get a passport to this country. Mlle. Kondoff went from consulate to consulate without success, and finally, after four months she secured a passport from the Greek government. It was a long journey—twenty-four days in crossing—but she is happy to be in America awaiting the return of Chief Engineer McFee, who is patiently hurrying through Southern seas on the Turrialba.

Joseph C. Lincoln a Poet

Probably not many of the thousands of readers who have enjoyed "The Portygee" and the other famous Cape Cod novels of Joseph C. Lincoln, know that the author won his first literary recognition as a writer of humorous and homely verse. There is, nevertheless, a steadily growing demand for Lincoln's book of verse, "Cape Cod Ballads," and the Appletons announce that the eighth edition is now being printed.

Conrad's English Birthplace

Captain Joseph Conrad once told a friend, an old sea captain, how difficult it was to make his family understand his desire to go to sea. "I wish I could explain to you what it meant when I, in the heart of Poland, told my family that I intended to become an English sailor. It is very hard to convey to you the effect of that statement. It was as though a bank clerk should announce that he intended to become a nun."

Mr. Conrad mediated a moment, and added: "You know I regard Lowestoft as my birthplace, because it was there that I first landed in England."

The captain also gave a plausible explanation of Mr. Conrad's laxity in the use of shall and will, which has been mentioned as one of the few traces of foreign origin in Mr. Conrad's written English. He says that this is due to that fact that Mr. Conrad first learned his English from Scots seafaring men, and the Scot has always used shall and will interchangeably. Therefore, Conrad's habit in this respect is not a proof of foreign origin, but rather suggests that his English came to him tinctured with the fine, harsh flavor of the North.

Poems by Arthur Symons

Arthur Symons's new volume of verse, "Lesbia and Other Poems," which the Duttons are publishing this week, brings together nearly a hundred poems of great variety of theme and treatment. There are sonnets, lyrics, bits of song, narrative and dramatic pieces. One of the loveliest of them all begins with this stanza:

"That you should live, be blithe and well,
When I am dead and in my grave,
It seems a thing incredible,
If death be not a lying knave."

The Holts' "Psychic Series"

The Holts' "Psychic Series" will start August 10 with the publication of E. M. S.'s "The Unseen Doctor," L. M. Bazett's "After-Death Communications" and Mrs. Kelway-Bamber's "Claude's Second Book." The first (known in London as "One Thing I Know") is an astonishing account by an invalid, bedridden for fifteen years, of her cure through a medium from an ostensibly post-carnate source. In Bazett's book the accounts given are strictly accurate, the statements made by communicators having been verified, wherever possible. Claude, a young aviator killed in the war, continues his revelations of the next world, which saw the light under the auspices of Sir Oliver Lodge. On October 1 Henry Holt's "Essays in Psychical Research" (reprinted from the "Unpopular" and "Unpartizan" reviews) will be added to the series. The author's two-volume work, "The Cosmic Relations and Immortality," has been universally recognized both as one of the most interesting and most authoritative works in the field of psychics. These will be followed by books by Mmes. Reginald de Koven and Effie Halsey, the Hon. Gerald Balfour and others.

Jewish Stories

Alfred A. Knopf has ready for immediate publication "Jewish Children," a selection of the best series by the late Shalom Aleichem, familiarly known as the Yiddish Dickens and the Yiddish Mark Twain. The reader will perhaps recall the author's coming to New York from Russia in the early days of the war and the great excitement created by his death shortly thereafter, and his funeral, which was one of the largest ever held on the New York lower East Side. The stories in "Jewish Children" recount with vividness and pathos the life in the village of the Russian pale. The translation is authorized and the stories appear in English for the first time.

Tramping Through Germany

American Officer Finds People Interested Chiefly in Getting Enough to Eat

DURING the last few years Germany, like Russia, has been pretty thoroughly isolated from America and western Europe. The few men, mostly correspondents, who have spent any considerable portion of time within the Teutonic frontiers have naturally kept most closely in touch with political developments and spectacular episodes. They have paid comparatively little attention to the everyday life of Germany since the armistice.

It is just this everyday life that Harry A. Franck describes with charm and spirit in "Vagabonding Through Changing Germany" (Harper's). There was nothing formal or official about Mr. Franck's visit to Germany in the spring of 1919. After being discharged from the American army he decided to cross the Rhine and see for himself what had taken place after the fall of the Kaiser. Speaking German fluently, he was able to wander wherever he wished without employing the cumbersome services of an interpreter.

The author seems to have been more interested in plain Hans Schmidt than in Ludendorff or Tirpitz or Ebert or Scheidemann. He does not mention a single interview with a celebrity. On the other hand, he talked freely with people of all classes, officers and private soldiers, farmers, workers, lawyers and teachers.

Food Shortage Genuine

Widespread and pinching hunger is perhaps the dominant impression which Mr. Franck carries away from Germany. In the districts occupied by the Allies there was an embarrassing shortage of certain articles, especially soap; but the general food situation was not desperate. In unoccupied Germany, however, especially in Berlin, Mr. Franck found abundant evidence of severe and general undernourishment, a condition which approached the point of semi-starvation in the case of persons unable to supplement the inadequate government rations with illicit purchases. The author gives the following account of the situation in Berlin:

"On the streets, especially of the poorer districts, the majority of those one passed looked as if they ought to be in bed, though many a household included invalids never seen in public. Flocks of ragged, unsoaped, pasty-skinned children swarmed in the outskirts. Even such food as was to be had by those in moderate circumstances contained slight nourishment, next to none for weaklings and babies; while the most hardy found next morning that very little of it had been taken up by the body. Hasty visitors to Berlin, well supplied with funds, who spent a few days in the best hotels, often with the right to draw upon the American or Allied commissaries, or with supplies tucked away in their luggage, were wont to report upon their return that the hunger of Germany was 'all propaganda.' Those who lived the unfavored life of the masses, even for as short a time, seldom, if ever, confirmed this complacent verdict. There were, of course, gradations in want, from the semi-starvation of the masses to the comparative plenty of the well to do; but the only ones who could be said to show no signs whatever of undernourishment were foreigners, war profiteers and those with a stranglehold on the public purse."

Food, or rather the lack of it, plays a large part in Mr. Franck's work. He describes in detail the various unpalatable substitutes which appear on almost every Teutonic bill of fare. Even beer has deteriorated alarmingly in quality and now ranks below the American 2.75 per cent beverage in acceptability.

In Reborn Poland

The author took an excursion into the eastern provinces which were taken away from Germany and given to Poland under the terms of the peace treaty. He visited Bromberg, which was still in German hands, and Posen, where Polish rule had already been set up. In the latter city, rechristened, in Slavonic fashion, Poznan, he found the Poles exulting in their reborn nation. The white eagle, historic symbol of the new state, was everywhere. "Men in civilian garb wore it in their hats or in their coat lapels; women adorned their bodices with it; boys and girls proudly displayed it in some conspicuous position. It fluttered on a thousand banners; it bedecked every Polish shopfront; it stared from the covers of newly appeared books, pamphlets, music sheets in the popular tongue; the very church spires had replaced their crosses with it."

As might be expected the Germans and Poles in Posen feel very differently about the change in the city's nationality. Mr. Franck lets both sides speak for themselves and then risks a few personal observations. He believes that German rule in Posen and West Prussia may fairly be credited with some very substantial material benefits, such as good roads; well planned cities, universal education, etc. But the Prussian government was so harsh and tyrannical, so insolent in its assertion of racial superiority, that the Poles were kept in a constant state of disaffection and welcomed the first opportunity to sever all connection with German "Kultur." Now the Poles are displaying a very human instinct to pay off old scores.

The author traveled hither and thither in Germany looking for excitement, but he was almost invariably disappointed. He went to Munich immediately after the suppression of the Communist uprising, but found the city quite peaceful and orderly. He believes that much of the turmoil and bloodshed in Germany after the armistice existed only in the minds of imaginative foreign correspondents.

No German Repentance

The author devotes a chapter to a symposium of German views on the war. He was only able to find one man who would admit that Germany was even half responsible for the outbreak of the conflict. For the most part he encountered only slight variations on the theme that peace-loving Germany's ruin had been compassed by Russian militarism, French desire for revenge and English commercial jealousy. As for atrocities, Mr. Franck's acquaintances either denied that any were committed by German troops or denounced the blockade and the alleged Russian outrages in East Prussia.

If the author found little repentance he also encountered little active animosity. The population of the occupied districts was docile, even servile in its attitude toward the Allied troops. Throughout his travels in all parts of Germany Mr. Franck was never molested or insulted on account of his nationality. The mass of the people seemed to view the war in retrospect rather stolidly, without nourishing any personal hatred of their conquerors.

It is doubtful if any book has yet been written about Germany so free from bias and propaganda, so full of life and color as Mr. Franck's. Full of lights and shades, and always leavened with a healthy American sense of humor, it presents a remarkably vivid and clear cut picture of the country and the people after the armistice.

FRANK B. GILBRETH, author of "Motion Study for the Hands," published by E. P. Dutton & Co.

A Ghetto Tale

Bertha Pearl Catches Spirit of East Side

PICTURESQUE and suggestive of literary material as the New York ghetto must seem to the young writer, its large, inchoate masses do not compress readily into fiction. Most writers about the ghetto err on the side of a too detailed realism, and, more often than not, one cannot see the wood for the trees.

In "Sarah and Her Daughter" (Thomas Seltzer) Bertha Pearl has not made this error. She has been carefully selective and has presented the Ghetto through the evolution of an East Side family. The picture that she presents is a vivid one. The woman Sarah, who makes such a heroic struggle with poverty, is a creature of flesh and blood—passionate, sensitive, by turns coarse and common, or fine and inspiring, as life presses in upon her and forces her submission. Her daughter, Minnie, is far less well individualized. Nevertheless, the story of her ambitions, her longings and frustrations, which makes up the last half of the book, are eloquently revealing of the milieu in which the young immigrant lives.

England in India

British Rule Defended by Former Official

THE case for the British administration of India is vigorously stated by Sir Verney Lovett, for thirty-five years a member of the Indian civil service, in "A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement" (Stokes). Sir Verney paints a dark picture of Indian conditions before the arrival of the British. Race and caste antipathies were unchecked; a backward population was misgoverned by corrupt and incompetent rulers.

Into this unhappy country came England bearing the blessings of Western civilization, law and order. The author emphatically denies that England has drained India of her resources. Foreign capital, in his opinion, has brought incalculable blessings in its train. Sir Verney believes that the taxes which Indians are compelled to pay for the upkeep of the British military and civil establishments are a cheap price for the manifold benefits of English rule.

The author traces the growth of Indian nationalist sentiment down to the present time, quoting liberally from speeches and articles by Hindu and Mahometan leaders. As a member of the Rowlatt Committee, which was formed for the purpose of investigating sedition and preparing punitive legislation, Sir Verney naturally sympathizes with the government's policy of ruthlessly stamping out all revolutionary conspiracies. Discussing the refusal of the British officials to repeal or modify the essential provisions of the new sedition laws, he says:

"Surrender they could not. They were face to face with indefeasible obligations. Had they abjured these they would have run away from their duty to protect the rising generation of educated Indians from ruinous influences and to safeguard the lives and property of innocent persons and loyal public servants. They would have abandoned the future of India to intimidation by the most violent and unscrupulous section of political opinion."

Sir Verney is convinced that the maintenance of British supremacy is the paramount issue in the government of India. He declares in conclusion that "never has the message been clearer that the interests of Britain and India are essentially the same."

Heroic Armenia

Novel of Adventure in the Near East

ENGLISH fiction has given us novels concerned with war in all parts of the globe. Mrs. Steel's "The Face on the Waters" and Mason's "The Four Feathers" come to mind at once as stories revealing British subjects enmeshed in the toils of war in India and Africa. One can continue in a list of considerable length. And here at hand is a new recruit in this section, A. C. Inchbold's "Love and the Crescent" (Stokes), an admirable presentation of recent events in that part of Asia which touches the Mediterranean.

In a clever way, the author of this novel introduces men and women representing Germany, Turkey, France and England, with Armenian refugees, as heroes, heroines and villains. The plot swings around the love of a Frenchman, Pierre Marson, for a young woman, Veronica Severin, in whose veins flows the blood of a British mother and an Armenian father. The scene, at the outset, is in Armenia during the days when Germany apparently was winning the war. A German consul, Otto Rosen, attempts to bluff Veronica into marrying him. He exhibits all the swinish coarseness of his race, plots to kill Marson and even aids in engineering a wholesale deportation and murder of Armenians. The balance of the novel deals with the courage of the young girl in defying Rosen and with the escape of Marson from prison after suffering torture at the hands of his captors.

This book, with its stirring account of an Armenian stand for freedom against heavy odds, while on a mountain overlooking the sea, is a valuable addition to the fiction of the late war.

Ibanez Sees Mexico in Turmoil

Spanish Novelist Gives Lucid and Colorful Picture of Carranza's Downfall

"MEXICO IN REVOLUTION" is the title given to Blasco Ibáñez's articles on Mexico, written for several newspapers and now collected into book form by E. P. Dutton & Co.

It is not to be wondered at that these reports of Mexico carry a conviction, an impression of vigor and authenticity, that no account of Mexico, however picturesque, has yet had. These are plainly written by a man who is alive to every shade of feeling and opinion in Mexico. He is, to be sure, a novelist, and susceptible to the color and romance of Mexico, but these sketches are compounded of something besides atmosphere. They come from a man who has the key to Mexican speech and thinking, and they have a hard framework of fact.

Obviously, all is grist that comes to the indefatigable Ibañez's mill. He takes the opportunity in a foreword to state that his Mexican experiences are to take the shape of a novel later, to be called "The Eagle and the Snake." These journalistic sketches are for the present the rough notes, the impressions hastily assembled and set down.

But the material he has brought does not need sublimation into literary form to be interesting. Whether Ibáñez aims at journalistic distinction or not, these sketches are fine bits of journalism. It even seems to us that a novel cannot make Mexico more interesting than these straight, rapid, colloquial descriptions, which contain such terse and vivid sketches of the land and the people, such acid, satirical picture of their leaders and so shrewd an estimate of the conflicting forces which control Mexico.

Ibáñez was drawn to liking none of the figures contending for the mastery of Mexico. The mild, patriarchal bearing of Carranza did not blind him to the man's obstinacy and stupidity. Obregon did not inspire him with any trust. General Gonzales seemed to him a treacherous opportunist; Bonillas, the man picked by Carranza to succeed himself, a man of no force and exceedingly unpopular to boot.

It was Carranza's determination to force on Mexico Bonillas that precipitated the revolution. The enemies of the administration said that Carranza was making conscious use of Bonillas' unpopularity to provoke a rising, in which case the elections could be postponed and Carranza might continue indefinitely to hold office. Whatever the purpose, the administration put itself solidly behind Bonillas, spending millions of the country's money on such a publicity campaign as Mexico had never seen. The irony of such a campaign in a country where the majority are illiterate did not seem to occur to any one, nor the futility of modern electioneering methods in a country where the voter's preference went chiefly for nothing.

If it were Carranza's intention to provoke Obregon to a show of resistance, he succeeded abundantly and with results unexpected to himself. Ibáñez had an interesting meeting with Obregon, a short, thick-set man of forty, who reminded Ibanez of a wild boar. He is untidy and affects a contempt for adornment to show his democracy. "He has a line of risqué stories which he tells with brutal frankness smacking of the camp and the bivouac. They helped me to understand the popularity of the man. He talks that way with every one, with the women of the street, with the workmen he meets, with the peasants in the country, and these simple people swell with pride at being treated with such familiarity and at hearing such amusing stories from a national hero, the conqueror of Celaya, a former Minister of War, and a man who has only one arm!"

There is, significantly, a passion for pacifism in Mexico at present. Carranza's appeal for Bonillas was on the score that he is a civilian. Obregon demands to be called "Citizen" Obregon, not "General."

Of army administration in Mexico Ibáñez gathered some astonishing knowledge. Just how a Mexican general can grow fabulously rich in five or six years is simply explained. He receives directly the money needed for his army's maintenance. He may pay for fodder for horses, but it is more economical to issue an ordor to have horses put to graze in private meadows. He may maintain the army in the required rations or not. He may have as many men as he draws pay for. But the government takes good care not to ask him for an accounting.

Ibáñez comes to no definite conclusion regarding Mexico, but he gives such clear and telling pictures of Mexico, the state of her land and her people, her trials and her hopes, as cannot fail to contribute to some ultimate solution of her problem.